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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE BIRGE TAPESTRY DECORATIONS.



THE present century is remarkable for its spirit of investigation, as well as for its wealth of art bequeathed from the ages. There is a rapid advance in discovery in all directions, leading to a widening down of art culture. We not only wish to inquire into the methods and results of art in bygone ages, but we are constantly striving to reproduce the charms and qualities of that which delighted the human mind

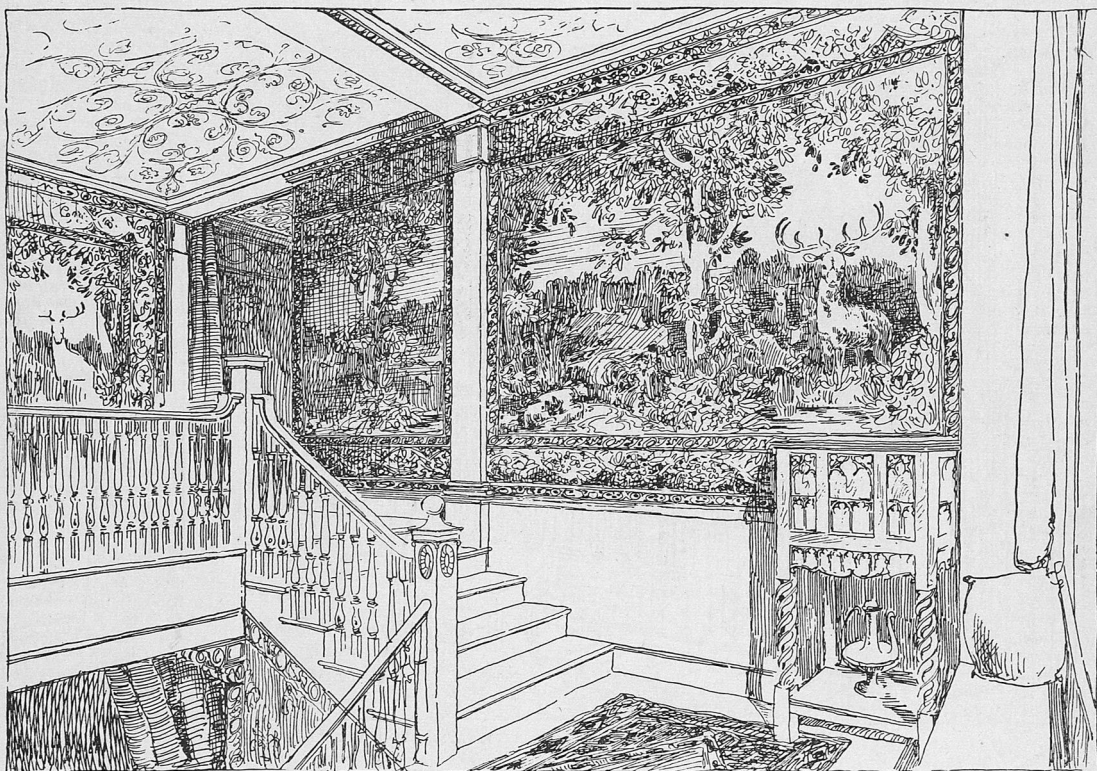
in past ages, restoring to mankind the beauty of neglected or lost arts, and thus keeping step with the progress of civilization.

Take for example, the manufacture of tapestry. No more decorative wall decoration was ever conceived. The rich, low

were the natural decoration of the Greek temples, and we read of Roman tapestries, Gothic and Flemish tapestry, whereon are painted the most beautiful scenes, usually taken direct from nature, in which birds and flowers, rocks and trees, flocks and herds are delineated, together with a great variety of human nature.

Of late years, the painting of tapestries by means of dyes has been resuscitated, as well as their being painted with the more durable oil pigments. The painted tapestry is as much a real tapestry as the woven tapestry, for the mere fact of weaving the picture does not confer any greater reality to the decoration than if painted, and the staining of a composition on paper belongs as much to real decorative art, as if the same scene were painted in oils. It demands an artist to create a design, and he must understand the nature of the materials he uses, and in the paper-made tapestry are reproduced all the effects of aient tapestries, whether woven, dyed, or painted, and not as deceptive imitations, but as substitutes which give at low cost the decorative effect of more costly tapestries.

Instead of constantly repeating patterns in ordinary wall



HALL STAIRCASE, WITH WALLS PANELLED WITH THE BIRGE TAPESTRY.

toned, harmonious colors form a background of singular beauty and variety, and in ancient times, as well as in the present, tapestries were either produced by the laborious and costly process of hand weaving, or the fabric was painted with dyes, which, having no body of themselves, allowed the canvas to preserve its grain and pliancy, giving even a better modulation of tone than that produced in the woven tapestry.

We speak to-day of tapestry painting as a lost industry. The Assyrians had embroidered tapestries, and in Egypt and Palestine the ornamentation of stuffs by weaving, embroidery, or by the application of color were arts known to us by the remnants of tapestry left from the wreck of time. Tapestries

papers, Messrs. Birge & Sons, with commendable enterprise, have produced the Birge Tapestry Decorations, an achievement in the art of wall paper manufacture, over which they have spent much thought and no little time and money. For years past they have thought of producing something that would be as marked an advance over ordinary paper hangings as their ordinary papers are an advance upon the work of a quarter of a century ago. The architecture of the country is advancing with rapid strides, and new departures in wall decoration are demanded in harmony with the architectural progress made.

We present our readers with an illustration of a hall staircase, showing the walls paneled with Birge tapestry, being the

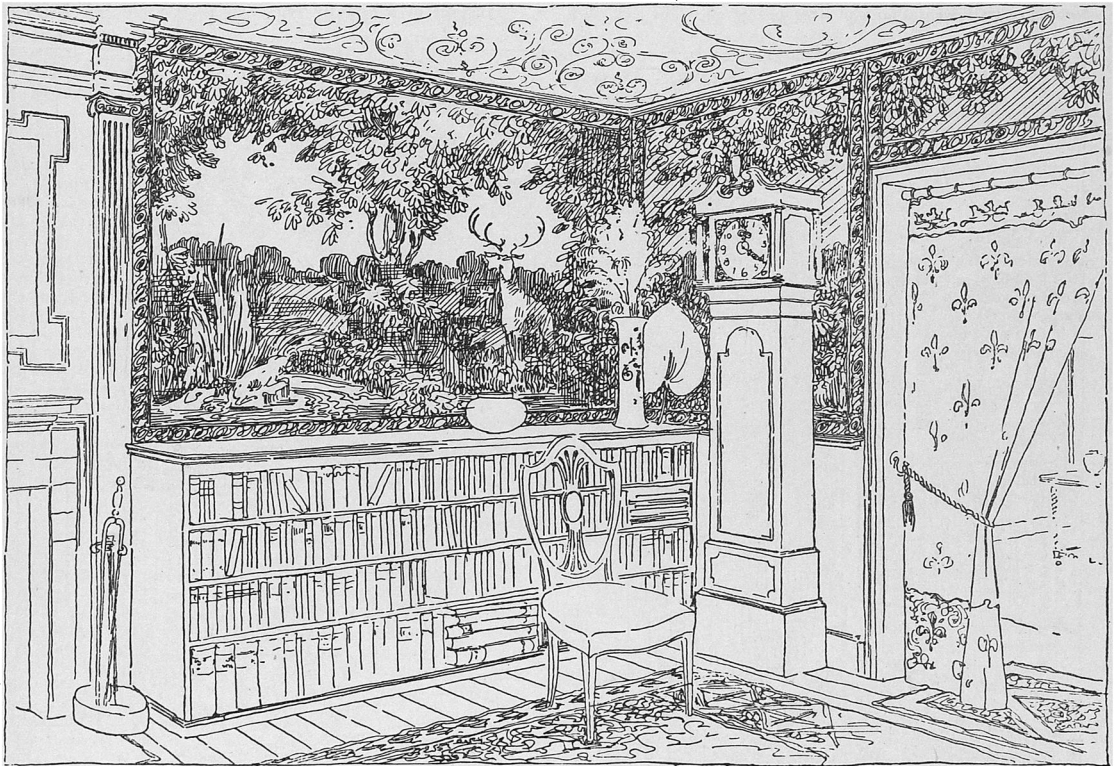
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pattern they have manufactured expressly for the World's Fair of 1893, as an evidence of the progressive nature of the art of making wall-papers in this country.

The Birge tapestry consists of four breadths of pictures each 28 inches wide and 5 feet high, and a border 20 inches wide used to panel the picture. Trimmers at top and bottom of the picture are included in the 20 inches wide, and are 4½ to 5 inches wide respectively. The means of application of such a panel are infinite. We give a further illustration of a library decorated with the Birge tapestry panels above low book-cases, with the trimmer cut from the border and used to panel all spaces. The large central picture may be divided into sections, each in itself a picture, and in this way any width of wall may be accommodated. As will be seen by the illustrations, by leaving off or narrowing the borders the height and width of the panels may also be varied, and, in fact, any shape of wall may be fitted. This form of decoration is peculiarly adapted to country houses in the English style, which are becoming so

In olden times beauty loving people put the artistic longings of their souls into the carvings of their furniture, which has a strength and grace that seem to elude the modern worker. A most interesting bit of furniture is an etagère made out of a finely and curiously carved old bedstead of rich dark mahogany. The ancient, spirally wrought bed-posts make fine stays and posters for the shelves, which are artistically cut in scroll-like curves out of the immense head and foot-boards. An oddly framed, old-fashioned looking glass surmounts the shelves, which are laden with rare old chinaware, dainty and elegant, and wrought with all the curious touches of old time art.

RESTFUL and harmonious coloring and pleasing design in house decoration demand consideration on the grounds of comfort far more than of fashion. The walls of a room met the eye at every turn, and unless some intelligent attention is given to their treatment they become the means of continual annoyance



LIBRARY, DECORATED WITH THE BIRGE TAPESTRY ABOVE LOW BOOK-CASES.

popular now. For the hall, library, or billiard room nothing could be better, and the use of such tapestry in hotels, clubs, etc., is obvious. In fact, they may be made peculiarly useful in a score of places and under varying conditions. The illustrations show some of the various methods of use, but they cannot in any way show the richness of the original hangings. They are large shadowy pictures, which do not attract or demand attention, but act as soothing reliefs to the eye.

The Birge tapestry may be hung below a picture moulding, with the wall above the moulding decorated with a stencil ornament, or they may be placed above a high wainscoting with or without wide friezes of paper or stucco above same.

Such an effort as this is a great triumph for the enterprising firm of manufacturers herein referred to, and we understand that their efforts to add to the beauty of American interiors has met with hearty appreciation.

to that subtle nerve sense which is so easily and ignorantly irritated. As we advance in the study of suitable surroundings we shall become convinced of the influence of just such outside discords, which, though already partially recognized, are helping to make a nervous and irritable race.

A QUAIN design for an electrolier is in the form of a wrought iron lamp with a dragon twisting himself around it and flames in the form of electric lights pouring from his mouth. One of the prettiest of the smaller fittings is a bronze fly from the mouth of which a light is pendant. These flies are placed at irregular intervals on the walls and make a curious and pretty effect. Cupids holding cut glass balls with drooping lamps of bronze containing twenty-four lights, are among the finest of recent productions.